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U.S. won't need Congress okay for guaranteeing Israel's oil

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The U.S. Administration will not need formal Congressional approval for its undertaking to guarantee Israel's oil supplies in a crisis situation. This is the firm opinion of State Department legal experts, and it emerged during the U.S.-Israel negotiating session yesterday in Jerusalem.

The U.S. is to undertake, as part of the interim settlement complex, to ensure Israel's oil needs if Israel's other foreign sources fail her.

Washington has also agreed to "compensate" Israel in cash for the loss of Abu Rodeis and to help build a subterranean oil reservoir in the Negev which would hold a one-year emergency supply.

Yesterday's five-hour session ended in mid-afternoon, and Dr. Kissinger flew to Alexandria leaving his wife Nancy here and pledging to return late last night to resume the negotiations this morning. He said progress was continuing and he wanted to get in as much work as possible before the sabbath.

Israeli officials now predict that the accord will be initialled on Sunday evening, after the Cabinet has given its final approval.

Israel is urging that Messrs. Sadat and Rabin themselves initial the accord, to give it the greatest possible political weight. Failing that it will be initialled by Foreign Ministers Allon and Fahmy.

It will come into effect, officials said, only when the "technical protocol" is signed by the two sides — probably in three weeks time in Geneva, after the diplomatic military working group has convened to draft final details.

Before the full signing, Israel may send a cargo of non-military goods through the Suez Canal, to test Egypt's undertaking under the 1974 disengagement accord to permit such cargoes to pass. This undertaking is to be a formal clause in the new interim agreement.

With the oil guarantee now ruled within the Administration's legitimate purview, the only component in the interim settlement package

requiring Congressional approval is the U.S. presence in the Sinai passes. The Israeli negotiating team has made it clear that Israel will not sign the final part of the interim settlement until Congress has debated the issue and given its approval. Israeli experts tend to endorse Dr. Kissinger's prediction that after some heated debate the Congress will eventually approve the U.S. presence.

Congress resumes next Tuesday after the summer, and the experts say it will take up to two weeks until the issue has moved through committee hearings and comes up for the vote on the floors of both Houses.

Administration officials will stress at the hearings that the envisaged U.S. contingent of 200-odd men will be a technical force operating strictly to gather intelligence information and pass it on to the two sides. While the contingent will hopefully make a contribution to the process of transition from war to peace, it will not itself be part of the peacekeeping process, the officials will stress.

The Administration has already shown itself wary of any hint that the U.S. contingent might have a territorial or peacekeeping responsibility beyond that of information-gathering.

The Israeli embassy in Washing-

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ton and Israel's supporters around the country will meanwhile seek to impress opinion-moulders with the utter dissimilarity of the envisaged Sinai force and any past U.S. role in Southeast Asia. In the latter case, the Americans were aiding one side in its war against the other. In the present case the Americans — all civilian technicians — will aid both sides to prevent war between them.

Israeli spokesmen will also contend that the U.S. surveillance role does not contradict the long-standing claim that Israel will never need foreign soldiers to defend her.

Egypt, seizing on the informational awkwardness for Israel, has already begun to stress to visiting American Congressmen and reporters that it was not Cairo, but Jerusalem which had sought the U.S. presence. Israeli policymakers counter by recalling that during the ill-fated March shuttle it was Cairo, not Jerusalem, which first suggested an American presence at Umm Kasheba and at the Egyptian station. They concede, though, that the subsequent proposal to broaden the American role was Israel's.

Yesterday's five-hour negotiating session was devoted in part to the U.S.-drafted document (reported in yesterday's third edition of *The Post*), to be signed by both sides, which will provide for the American presence in the Passes.

There will also be a reference to the American presence in the Annex to the formal, public Israel-

Egypt Agreement. (The Annex will specify the lines of withdrawal and advance and the UNEF and American roles. It will be accompanied by a map.)

Israeli sources said yesterday they still hoped there would be three manned American surveillance stations in addition to the American supervisory presence at the Umm Kasheba Israeli-manned station and at the parallel Egyptian-manned station. So far Egypt has agreed to only two manned U.S. stations and to four unmanned "sensors."

Points still outstanding between Israel and Egypt yesterday included: "semantic" questions in the formal, public agreement; staggered use of some sections of the coastal road to Abu Rodeis; Egypt's undertakings — indirectly through the U.S. — to moderate the economic boycott and diplomatic action against Israel.

Israeli sources hoped these matters would be quickly wrapped up, leaving today's talks mainly to bilateral U.S.-Israel issues. These include a memorandum of understanding on future political coordination in advance of the Geneva Conference (though none of the Geneva parties seems overly keen at present to resume the Peace Conference, with Syria angling for its own interim settlement), and also Israel's aid request for the coming year.

Before yesterday's long working session, Dr. Kissinger spent two hours with Mrs. Golda Meir who is vacationing in Jerusalem. They met alone.

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